

Downtown

Everybody's Neighborhood

An Update from Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman



Downtown – The Heart of Our Region

The future of our city depends on the quality of life in our neighborhoods, especially the vitality of everybody's neighborhood – Downtown Columbus.

Downtown has long been the heart of the region's economic growth. It is the largest job center in Central Ohio with 18% of the total workforce or 140,000 jobs. Property values at \$3.6 billion, represent 13% of Franklin County's commercial/industrial tax base. Additionally, Downtown boasts 37% of Franklin County's supply of office space, making it an important center of commerce. Yet today, despite its many assets, our Downtown is not healthy.

Several factors have caused Downtown to stagnate – these include a lack of housing, office vacancy rates of 21% and a decline in Downtown retail.

In January, Mayor Michael B. Coleman began the process of addressing the threats facing Downtown Columbus. With funding from the Ohio General Assembly, the City retained the nationally-recognized urban planning and policy consulting firm of Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Inc. (HR&A) to help create a strategic business plan to revitalize and strengthen Downtown Columbus.

Successful Public Private Partnership

Mayor Coleman has appointed an Advisory Committee of senior business leaders and a Task Force of business and civic representatives to help shape the plan.



Public meeting participants attended smaller group sessions to brainstorm ideas.

Where We Are

To date, HR&A has interviewed hundreds of local leaders and held two public workshops on October 9 and November 13 to gather ideas for a more vibrant Downtown. In addition, the Task Force and Advisory Committee are meeting regularly to help with the plan's development.



John Alschuler from HR&A leads a public session on the Downtown Plan.

Community Input Creates Comprehensive Plan

Over 600 people attended the October and November public sessions. In October, the public meeting divided into smaller groups that looked at housing, transportation/traffic, urban design, Downtown attractions and retail, and riverfront and open space. Attendees asked the plan to address the need for rental and owner-occupied housing, traffic speed, lack of parking garages, too many surface parking lots, the need for park development along the Riverfront and more Downtown activities and festivals.

We're Listening to You

At the November meeting, planners presented several recommendations based on earlier feedback. The Scioto Riverfront emerged as one of the anchor amenities for Downtown. Planners also examined ways to improve the connectivity between the various downtown activity centers. The size of Downtown Columbus is larger than Boston and the Chicago Loop district combined; strong green space and transit connections could serve to knit the various downtown districts into one community. Other recommendations included more parking garages, fewer one-way streets, and landscaped streets that were inviting to pedestrians.

After an update from both Mayor Coleman and Task Force Chair Alex Shumate, participants moved into smaller groups to offer feedback on riverfront plans, the proposed urban design framework of the city, and traffic and public transit improvements. A new group where citizens could *Tell Us Your Great Idea*, let attendees brainstorm. Some of the great ideas suggested include:

- A radio or television station with studio windows at street level
- An NBA team
- A downtown light rail line
- More downtown housing
- A downtown school
- More two way streets
- A central, public square
- A skateboarding park



Tell Us Your Great Idea

Mayor Coleman is launching a campaign to encourage more citizens to get involved in the creation of the plan.

What would make our Downtown great? Parks? Housing? Shops? Festivals?

Let Mayor Coleman hear from you.

Call: 645-7787

E-mail:

downtownplan@cmhmetro.net

Fax: 645-2486

Mail to: Mayor Coleman

Tell Us Your Great Idea

c/o Downtown Development Office

109 N. Front Street

Columbus, OH 43215

Visit – <http://downtownplan.columbus.gov>



c/o Downtown
Development Office
109 N. Front Street
Columbus, OH 43215



What will be in the plan?

The plan that is being developed will be a blueprint for the revitalization of Downtown. It will contain pragmatic, short- and long-term solutions to reinvigorate and sustain our Downtown. It will address five areas:

- Office space
- Retail
- Housing
- Parking and transportation
- Riverfront, parks and recreation

The plan will also include financing guidelines and a timeline for development activities. Several themes emerged in the November meeting as HR&A discussed six development principles. These include the need to –

- Create a collection of downtown districts
- Knit those districts together with strong connections
- Make the Scioto River an anchoring amenity
- Reclaim the public realm for pedestrians
- Focus on Town and Main Street area initially for mixed-use development and Gay Street for in-fill opportunities
- Use planning framework to guide development economics

What’s next?

More information will be presented to the public as the plan continues to evolve with unveiling expected in early 2002.



Columbus residents enjoy the view of the Scioto River from Downtown’s Battelle Park.

Who’s Who on the
Downtown Advisory
Committee and
Task Force

Advisory Committee
Alex Shumate, Squire, Sanders
& Dempsey, Chair

- Tanny Crane, Crane Plastics
- Linn Draper, AEP
- Tom Hoaglin, Huntington Bancshares
- Jerry Jurgensen, Nationwide Insurance
- C. Robert Kidder, Borden
- Brit Kirwan, The Ohio State University
- Nancy Kramer, Ten Worldwide
- John P. McConnell, Worthington Industries
- Doug Olesen, Battelle
- Ron Pizzuti, Pizzuti, Inc.

Task Force Members

- Jay Schottenstein, Schottenstein Stores
- Robert Walter, Cardinal Health
- Audrey Weil, CompuServe
- Leslie H. Wexner, The Limited Inc.
- John F. Wolfe, Dispatch Printing
- Todd Applebaum, Cup O’ Joe/Stauf’s
- Herb Asher, The Ohio State University
- Paul Astleford, Greater Columbus Convention & Visitor’s Bureau
- Ron Barnes, COTA
- Otto Beatty, Jr., Otto Beatty Jr. Associates
- Rev. Charles Booth, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
- Chan Cochran, Cochran Public Relations
- Peter Cooper, City Center

- Anthony Forte, Franklin County
- Jim Garrison, Burgess & Niple
- Bill Habig, MORPC
- Ray Hanley, Greater Columbus Arts Council
- Michael Helfer, Nationwide Insurance
- Stephanie Hightower, Columbus College of Art & Design
- Melissa Ingwersen, Bank One
- Kyle Katz, Katz Interests
- Kathy Kerr, Congresswoman Deborah Pryce
- Doug Kridler, CAPA
- Jim Kunk, Huntington Bancshares
- Cathy Mayne Lyttle, Worthington Industries
- Karen McClain, SBC Public Relations
- Tom McClain, Battelle
- Jill McDonald, Grapevine Cafe

- Val Moeller, Columbus State Community College
- David Mustine, AEP
- Joel Pizzuti, Pizzuti, Inc.
- Jim Rarey, Central Ohio Bldg. & Const. Trades Council
- Todd Ritterbusch, Columbus Leadership Technology Council
- John Rosenberger, Capitol South
- Michael Schiff, Schottenstein Stores
- Dan Schmidt, JDS Investments
- Bill Shelby, Spectrum Properties
- Rich Simpson, Bricker & Eckler LLP
- Harrison Smith, Smith & Hale
- Adam Troy, Omni Management Group
- Curtiss Jewell, Excel Management
- Phil Urban, Grange Insurance
- Bob Vennemeyer, Design Group
- Guy Worley, Franklin County Commissioner’s Office